The Commonweal

April 8, 1949

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Existentialism

Kurt F. Reinhardt

Europe Unites

Lily Doblhoff

Home Rule Rent Control

The "Cultural and Scientific" Tragedy

VOLUME XLIX 15c NUMBER 26

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Next Week

FUTURE OF THE PARTIES by Oren Root, Jr., takes up the much-bruited idea that the conservative coalition in our present Congress should lead to a new alignment of American political parties. The defeat of much of the Truman legislative program, despite the stunning Democratic victory in November, makes this a beguiling notion. But Mr. Root vigorously opposes it and explains why.

HOLY WEEK AND PENANCE by Jean C. de Menasce, is an eloquent meditation which treats at some length the question of contrition for the past. Should we as Christians simply forget our past misdeeds once they have been absolved in Confession? How can we, by reflecting on past deficiencies in these days commemorating Christ's Passion, find substance for fruitful meditation?

TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE by G. B. Harrison, the noted Shakespearean scholar, deals principally with Msgr. Ronald Knox's new translation of the Old Testament. Yet it squarely faces the general problem of translating the Sacred Scriptures into the vernacular.

Also editorial comment on the news of the week, Catholic International News, and revealing reviews of current books, plays and movies.

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Home Rule Rent Control

UNHAPPILY when such wholesome phrases as "home rule" or "states' rights" occur in national political debates, they invariably camouflage self-seeking or sectional interests. At first blush nothing sounds more persuasive than the idea that rent controls should be decided strictly on the basis of local conditions. And on the surface "home rule" also has a strong attraction for the many citizens who look with increasing concern at the steady expansion of the activities of our federal government.

The first few layers below the surface, however, reveal certain damning aspects of the home rule provisions of the new rent control bill accepted by the House and Senate conferees.

What impelled these men to come to this agreement? First, the expiration, March 31, of the standing act. A new measure had to be signed by the President by that date if control were not suddenly to cease altogether. Something had to be done. But was there a public demand for decontrol due to the easing of the housing pinch? And were municipal and state authorities requesting that the controls be turned over to them?

Not at all. The United States Conference of Mayors, which has just concluded its annual sessions, declared that most American cities and states were not equipped to handle such controls. Only six of the states have rent control systems of their own and a number of them have dismissed their legislatures until 1951.

Moreover, the basic shortage of rental housing persists. A recent survey of ninety large American cities and of the countryside, reported in *Business Week,* discloses an acute need of rental dwellings, and the Senate Banking Committee was forced to the conclusion that "removal of rent controls would result in an increase of from 25 percent to 100 percent in rents over the length and breadth of our land."

So there is neither pressure from local authorities to take over nor any appreciable change in national housing conditions. The agitation for these far-reaching legislative changes comes directly from the National Association of Real Estate Boards, which of all Washington lobbies has recently exerted "the most insistent and clamorous pressure," according to the New York *Times.* "In the last few weeks, this lobby has maintained a steady bombardment of Senators and Representatives with letters, resolutions and newspaper editorials from virtually every state and from hundreds of Congressional districts demanding the curtailment or the abandonment of rent controls." It is likewise this lobby which is credited with having choked the Taft-Ellender-Wagner public housing bill in the 80th Congress.

All this is not to say that landlords do not have some reasonable rent adjustments coming to them. But the misleading slogan of "home rule" conceals several dangers. State legislatures are even more notoriously susceptible to private pressures than the Congress. In those states where rural representatives dominate the deliberating body it will be only too easy to over-ride representatives of the cities in which the most acute shortages exist. Because of the intricacies of the bill, "organized confusion and litigation" are inevitable in certain localities, to quote the St. Louis *Post Dispatch,* which also fears that this unfortunate new rent bill could be held unconstitutional, on the grounds that the federal government is thereby legislating for states and municipalities. If the Supreme Court should so hold, that would throw out rent control altogether.

In any event the Truman Administration and the electorate together have suffered a major reverse.

The "Cultural and Scientific" Tragedy

THE CULTURAL and Scientific Conference for World Peace, which was evidently to become a kind of traveling circus in as many cities as its members could storm, was a mess in its opening three-day stand in New York. The main reason for this was not the participation of Shostakovich and Fadeyev and the five other

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Russians, nor the presence of "captive" delegations from Russian satellite states, and it was not the fantastic line of Politburo propaganda which the Conference served. The principal reason for the mess is the "Western" and American category of fellow-traveler and appeaser.

Holding the Conference in the US created a double problem: to prevent the spread and strengthening of Russia-communist-appeasement; and to propagandize and "convert" Communists. It was almost impossible to prevent these two problems, or purposes, from working against each other. The conversion theme and effort got definitely second priority.

There are almost unlimited reasons to oppose the appeasement of Communism. Sufficient are the facts that: the Communist Myth is untrue. Communism, and the present Russian State régime, take advantage, everywhere all over the world, of divided opinion and thought and resolution in order to advance their own power over people, areas and resources. Appeasement and fellow-traveling solidify the régime which oppresses the Russian people and such a tragic number of other people over whom Stalin and the Politburo crack their tyrannical whip. The domestic appeaser threatens peace very directly, because of the disunity and disturbance he tries to propagate, and because it is mathematically obvious that there is a point beyond which the US and England and other non-communist powers will certainly *not* retreat, and appeasers try to push us past that point of belligerent return.

How much better it would have been (if our "cultural and scientific" people were not subject to the snares and delusions of the commie line) to have greeted this stupid Conference in completely different fashion—aimed at "converting" rather than primarily discrediting. We would have welcomed the largest number possible of Russian and other foreign antagonists, and would have given them the friendliest and most sympathetic treatment possible. We would have tried to learn and to show, and always, in every way, to establish good personal relations with every unfortunate Red in the Conference.

Most of the properly anti-communist people decided that the first effort had to be to protect Americans from false words and ideas, and hence the visa difficulties, picketing, antagonistic press reports, and anger which were the medicinal measures that predominated. And the anti-communist activists deserve congratulations for spoiling the pitch of the conferees and for submerging their propaganda.

But urgently needed is a program for affecting the fellow-travellers in America, in order to open the way for "conversion" and for a happier social temper. There should be established, clearly as a preliminary and to handle the negative aspects, *continuing,* resourceful organizations of democratic defense, both governmental and private, comparable in efficiency to the numerous Party and "front" outfits. None is in adequate operation now, and everything has to be extemporized on an emergency basis. Among the wealthy, for instance, there are plenty of anti-communists, to be sure, but as a group, our business men and men of affairs give the solid impression of being dollars-and-cents anti-Reds, ever ready to put in a bad word, but devoting no regular time or work or money to genuine, reasonable and positive (and necessarily somewhat expensive) campaigns against Communism and for socially just democracy, so long as the investment does not show up on the weekly balance sheet as quick profit.

Very essential is the object of removing the motives which impel citizens to capitulate to the Politburo and to tag along in the vigorous company behind Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Broadly, this is the public and personal job of social reform and the strengthening of social justice. But it is a more intimate work as well. True friendliness going out to a particular, individual person may very often remove some of the more subtle and inner forces which hinder objective judgment and drive a man toward the avenging power of Moscow.

Western Germany and Western Union

IS THE present or the future of Germany more fraught with peril? Each of the Western occupying powers has its own answer. The British oppose the American desire (which is an influential one, since the US contributes a majority of the occupation costs) to retain a majority voice on economic decisions. The French, who know the Germans best, from closest possible contact, fear them most; for them history has repeated itself, gramophone-record-wise, three times in seventy years. And what is told three times, in life as in fairy tales, is apt to be true. The French therefore insist on controls being retained which are not compatible with Western German ideas of centralization. The Rhineland, the Ruhr and Baden, they say, must remain special zones of French interest. So much for present and past. The US is most concerned with what shall in the future fill the vacuum of Central Europe, which involves the whole American-Russian relationship.

Can Germany be re-united, as the tremendous token of peaceful purpose between the two titans? Or shall a Western Germany, politically centralized, be the bribe offered by the Allies for what Western Germany has to offer strategically and economically? Already Germany's industrial output is up to 78% of 1936, a full re-armament year. As far as the US is concerned, Germany can talk turkey; it has something to offer the Allies that is solider than lip-service to democracy.

Meanwhile, Western Germany is playing her

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three boorish suitors against the bear. Dr. Wilhelm Wagner chairman of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Council that is writing a Constitution for Western Germany, declared on March 24th, "We have reached the end"—not of the road, but of their tether.

The 30 small German-border revisions, just agreed to by six-power experts, in favor of Holland and Belgium, seem but the tiniest of pin-pricks. But, cropping up now, instead of three years ago, they are pin-pricks which may well help to burst the whole bubble of Western Germany. The fable about the faggot is fearfully true: if the Western Powers were united in a bundle, neither renascent German nationalism nor Russian aggression could destroy their purpose. But each sorry, separated stick, is only too easy to break across the knee — and does it matter whose knee?

Can men be forced to federate? The Allies wish a federated Germany, with guaranteed rights for the individual German states. The Germans themselves wish a centralized state, without any such safeguards. Can men be compelled to be free? It is a question Rousseau asked, and the world has stayed too long for an answer.

The United States cares more for the Humphrey Committee's recommendations (that Germany's steelmaking capacity be increased yet another 25%) than for any political impasse. France, knowing far too well what that steel might be used for, is digging her toes in, and US commentators grimly say, the first job is to bring France into line. Meanwhile, Russia smugly profits and propagands: see how you capitalists love one another! Otto Nuschke, and other Communists, casually visiting the Western Zones, seem to prove their points that only Russia truly desires a strong, united, centralized Germany. For only Russia does not fear it.

There can be no solution at the political, economic, strategic, or historical level alone. Only a great act of imaginative vision can prevent the frustrated Western Germans from throwing the whole project into the waste basket. Only in Washington in April at the top-level of planning, when the foreign ministers meet with Mr. Acheson, can the victors and vanquished, guilty and innocent, all sinners together, rise on the stepping stones of dead selves to build that United States of Europe without which there can survive no Europe, and, very possibly, no United States.

Public Power in the Northwest

FAR FROM the Tennessee Valley, public power enthusiasts have won, in the state of Washington, what has been called "their greatest victory since the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority sixteen years ago." The victors, the City Council of Tacoma, shellacked the losers, the privately-owned Puget Sound Power and Light Company, when the Tacoma Council voted to condemn and acquire for public control about $15,000,000 worth of the Company's property and business—one-fourth of Puget's generating capacity. The president of the Company saw this as the end of private utilities in the state.

Although the Company took its defeat fighting-mad, this was not the first loss it has suffered. For the past ten years, nearby federal power, such as the Bonneville Power Administration, has been a threat to Puget's domain, and within the last five years, several counties in Western Washington have either taken over, or filed notice of intention to take over, the Company's properties for reorganization into "public utilities districts." Two weeks ago, the state Senate passed a measure that would set up a state power authority and give the public utilities districts the right to acquire property through negotiation with power companies.

This trend toward public ownership, at a time when the Northwest is seriously short of electric power to meet the needs of incoming industries, is a recourse to public control and an affront to private enterprise in the general area where right now a Columbia Valley Authority, modeled on TVA, is being studied at President Truman's direction. The development of electric power, flood control, natural resources, fishing rights, etc., in the Columbia Valley requires a unitary co-ordination which will represent the culmination of the public-control trend which seems to be on the move now in the state of Washington.

Resistance to this trend, and fear of it, will be aroused in anyone who is apprehensive about too much state control of business or private enterprise or individual action. A few days ago such resistance took voice in Nebraska against the contemplated Missouri Valley Authority. Yet the great benefits of river systems cannot be had so long as regional planning is not projected under inter-state control and so long as competing and conflicting state and federal agencies do not answer to one Authority. Wherever, as in the state of Washington, or in TVA, CVA, or MVA, problems are to be solved through public ownership and control, the objective should be to retain and encourage, as far as practicable, local action, private enterprise and small business and farming units—an objective that is feasible, as experience in the Tennessee Valley has already demonstrated. There, the most encouraging contribution to the development of local initiative, as opposed to the monster-controls of statism, has been the degree to which the people themselves in the area exercise local responsibility and a direct voice in the conduct of the Valley Authority.

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Europe Unites

A report from Brussels on the progress of a revolution

Lily Doblhoff

AT THE INAUGURAL session of the Congress for European Unity in Brussels, held a few weeks ago, Mr. Winston Churchill ended his speech with the refrain of the French revolutionary song from the days of the Great French Revolution: *"Ça ira!"*

At the closing session of the same Congress, on February 28th, the Nuncio, Monsignore Cento, referring to these same words, said that now that the work of the Congress had come to an end, the result seemed so promising that he felt he had to modify the words of the French revolutionary song by saying: *"Ça va!"*

It had a symbolic meaning that these two men, the British statesman most venomously attacked by Communists, and the Delegate of the Holy See representing Catholicism, attacked passionately by the same materialistic forces, quoted words of the Revolution, which we usually consider *the* Revolution of European history. Perhaps these two men referred to revolutionary words since they both want to make a revolution too, a modern revolution against all that is tyranny and despotism.

★

TO UNDERSTAND what this session of the Congress in the Belgian capital meant, one has to recall that it was exactly nine months ago that the first meeting of those who want to serve the unification and recovery of Europe took place in the Dutch capital.

The idea of European unity has haunted many statesmen, many thinkers as, in the course of history, succeeding wars proved with greater emphasis that the European continent, if it wants to survive, will have to resign many erroneous illusions, many chauvinistic exaggerations, and subordinate all national and individual egotism to the one and only ideal: the salvation and enforcement of Europe as a whole.

It was once again Mr. Churchill, who, exactly as he had understood in 1940 the deadly danger looming over Europe and had offered France union with Great Britain for a more efficient defense against Hitlerite totalitarianism, now formulated in clear words this ideal that had looked like a dream and had been abandoned by many who, at first, had wanted to sponsor it. He put *facts* in crude words just as he had done in 1940, and said that Europe, as long as she is divided into small countries, would be in danger of seeing these countries swallowed up one by one by expansionist dictatorships.

Earlier Churchill had launched his first appeal for unity in a speech held at the University of Zurich in September, 1946. His words were passionately commented on, attacked, and admired, as always happens with daring ideas. But Churchill was not the man to be discouraged and, supported by a staff of men who were ready to face the imminent danger in which Europe was, he launched a campaign to unite; first he approached organizations and societies already set up in the field of Federalism. These organizations were:

The *European Union of Federalists,* under the Chairmanship of Mr. Brugmans, former Dutch Minister, a society that grouped most Federalistic Movements in Western Europe.

The *United Europe Movement* under the Chairmanship of Mr. Churchill himself, uniting prominent men and women from all parties, as well as the churches, universities, trade unions, etc.

The Economic League for European Cooperation under the Chairmanship of M. Van Zeeland, former Belgian Premier, an organization that mainly unites prominent economists, industrialists and businessmen from West European countries.

The *French Council for United Europe* under the Chairmanship of M. Herriot, President of the French Parliament, joining thinkers and politicians without party differences.

The European Parliamentary Union under the Chairmanship of M. Bohy, Chairman of the Socialist Party in the Belgian Parliament.

The *Nouvelles Equipes Internationales* under the Chairmanship of M. Bichet, an organization which unites Christian Democrat and Centre Parties.

These Movements for European Unity convened to organize The Hague Congress in May 1948 with these purposes: 1) to demonstrate the widespread support for the cause of European unity, 2) to deliberate upon practical recommendations to Governments, and 3) to provide a fresh impetus to the international campaign for unification.

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THE CONGRESS at The Hague proved to be a success beyond all expectations: more than 800 persons of all European nations attended it, including well-known statesmen, clergymen, deputies of Parliaments, leading industrialists as well as trade-unionists, poets, scientists, artists, lawyers, professors etc. These men and women were invited exclusively as outstanding individuals, representing Europe's profile.

Three committees—a political, a cultural and a social and economic committee—worked on the suggestions and plans and on May 9th, a mass-meeting of 40,000 people was held in Amsterdam. The Congress passed resolutions stressing the necessity to: 1) unite Europe with the greatest possible speed, 2) integrate Germany into this united Europe, 3) lay the foundations for a European Assembly, 4) draw a Charter of Human Rights, 5) compose a Supreme Court.

These hopes for unity seemed to be fully justified in August, three months after The Hague Congress, when the Committees submitted to European Governments preliminary proposals for a European Assembly and these suggestions were adopted officially by the French and the Belgian Governments and submitted to the five Brussels Treaty Powers.

The stage reached then proved Mr. Churchill to be right when he spoke of the history of all efforts to unite Europe in the course of centuries and, recalling Henry IV of France and his "Grand Design," to create a union of leading Christian States of Europe for defense against the Turkish invaders, added: "We are the servants of the Grand Design, the more so, as the company that gathered at The Hague can claim to be the voice of Europe."

The idealism shown by these men who have outlived so many frustrated hopes was wonderfully elating and M. Ramadier, the old French socialist, expressed it with youthful enthusiasm when he said: "The idea that was once the vision of dreamers of old has now become the design of statesmen. Europe is for many distant lands the market and storehouse of their products and the factory where these products are manufactured."

Eastern European statesmen had been invited to attend this gathering and Mr. Gafencu, the former Rumanian Foreign Minister, expressed the hopes and longings of this part of Europe, saying: "Europe could not be born to new life in the West if it was dying in the East; it could not regain its health, its greatness and its strength except in the framework of its natural limits. Nowhere does the word 'Europe' provoke more powerful and moving response than in the countries of Eastern Europe. I am convinced that I express the profound sentiments of my country and that of neighboring lands now sharing her fate, solemnly affirming their fidelity to Europe, their desire to form an integral part of United Europe, the hope that they place in the success of an enterprise in which, if we wish to save and unite the Continent, we must face the great problem as a whole and find an overall solution to it."

Mr. Duncan Sandys fully understood the importance of a one and undivided Europe when he said: "It is not for us to pull an iron curtain between some of our members and the others."

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NINE MONTHS passed from The Hague Congress to the day at the end of February when the builders of United Europe met again in Brussels; when the delegates heard a statesman say in one of the opening speeches: "The period of pregnancy is to be considered over—a healthy child has been born," it seemed to them that he was right.

Hard and strenuous work has been achieved in Brussels and there can be no doubt whatever that a very important step forward has been realized.

First, the principles of an exactly outlined European policy have been laid down, the first of which is that Europe has to unite if her survival and world-peace are to be preserved, since survival and world-peace both are threatened by totalitarian tyranny. The basis of this United Europe will be the human rights of the individual —first of all, the freedom from fear; and the State would give over, according to the principles of United Europe, some of its former prerogatives so that the individual would have the right to ask for equity and justice even *against* the State; the individual, in return, would have to accept the limitation of personal egotism and the rules of self-discipline that follow from this.

The other fundamental principle on which United Europe will have to be built, according to the principles laid down in Brussels, is that the movement shall have the full collaboration of the workers. As Paragraph 5 of the Political Principles says: "Within the new organization the workers must play their part in management and in the exercise of authority to the full extent of their technical and political capacity."

This paragraph lies at the bottom of a highly important development that all who attended the Brussels Congress were able to witness: the men who represent the masses in European countries had a much wider inuflence and the rôle they were asked to play became more far-reaching than it had been after The Hague Congress. Men like Léon Jouhaux, the leader of the French CGT, was elected Chairman of the Council, Guy Mollet, Marceau Pivert, Paul-Henri Spaak, André Philippe—all Socialists—played leading parts in Brussels. Socialist exiled leaders from Eastern European States like the Yugoslav Topalovitch

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and the Hungarian veteran workman Charles Peyer, were members of the respective national delegations and represented the workmen of their countries, subjugated by totalitarian terror.

Passionate debates transpired in the sessions of the Commissions; these debates proved that Europe will have to be united by taking into consideration the profound diversity of each member-nation, so that there shall be no compulsory choice between liberty and authority, but rather a synthesis of the two.

A "revolution" has started in Brussels, a revolution that seems to be on its way to realization; it is this truly democratic and Christian-minded revolution that the men who met in the last days of February want to call to life, so that peace and the survival of Europe may be assured.

The Problem of Human Existence

Existentialism: a new Paris fashion or permanent crisis?

Kurt F. Reinhardt

HUMAN EXISTENCE has always been a problem for man, the rational animal, who, in virtue of his faculty of rational reflection, could not help looking searchingly and critically at his own life and at life in general, and comparing his own mode of being with that of other creatures. *Existentialism,* in its modern and particularly its contemporary form, concentrates this critical reflection on the individual human self. It confronts this individual human existence with those collective claims and forces which threaten to submerge or pulverize individuality and personality in abstract, ideal essences or in such pseudo-absolutes as "the nation," "the fatherland," "the race," "the international proletariat," etc. In view of this danger, man passionately reasserts himself as an *individuum,* as an indivisible unity or substance, conscious of the fact that no valid substitution can ever be made for a human personality. Existentialism has risen in modern Europe because the steadily increasing pressures of collectivism and abstract idealism have forced the individual to a resolute and radical self-affirmation.

The rise of existentialism is thus one of the symptoms of a specifically European crisis, although in its broader ramifications it is indicative of the modern crisis of human existence as such. History offers ample evidence that, as long as human life and culture are healthy and normally integrated, the individual and universal elements balance each other. In times of severe stress and strain, however, when the foundations of human life and of the established system of values have been shaken, when man experiences more acutely the insecurity of life, one or the other of these elements tends to assert itself disproportionately and often pathologically.

In existentialism, then, the weight or burden of life lies heavily on the individual and on the contingent and finite aspects of his "being-in-the-world" (Heidegger). But once contingency and finiteness become the exclusive frame of reference in human existence, man's interest and preoccupation center in increasing measure in his own individual predicaments and uncertainties. In such a self-centered state of mind he is prone to become oblivious to the social components and needs of human nature and, burrowing deeply in the mysterious grounds of his own self, he starts on a dangerous journey of subterranean adventures. A certain kind of existentialism has without doubt succumbed to this kind of narcissistic self-centrism while another kind, taking cognizance of the non-contingent spiritual component of human nature, has arrived at various possibilities of "transcendence." It is thus, roughly speaking, a different anthropology that accounts for the metaphysical and ontological differences between theistic existentialism (Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Marcel), on the one hand, and the non-theistic or atheistic forms of existentialism (Heidegger, Sartre), on the other. In its ambivalence existentialism mirrors the ambivalence and instability of human nature and both the positive and negative possibilities implicit in man's position in the universe. Beyond this, existentialism offers documentary proof of the desperate seriousness with which some of the best minds of the present age have been wrestling with both the problem of man and the problem of philosophy.

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THE MAJOR theme of existentialism is, as the term indicates, *existence,* this term being understood in the meaning conveyed by the German word "Existenz," as an *ek-stasis,* an *ek-sis-*

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tence, a "standing-out" from the mere biological vitality by which all sub-human forms of existence are characterized and circumscribed. Martin Heidegger has this etymological root-meaning of "existence" in mind when he distinguishes between three different modes in which existents are or have their being: (1) things are "given" or exist as objects of human knowledge; (2) things are "given" or exist as tools or means of human activity (a hammer, for example, is "given" in this way: it derives its meaning, its signification, from the practical use which man makes of it); (3) the existent called "man" stands out from all other modes of existence in that man *is* not simply and statically like minerals, plants, and animals, or like inanimate tools, but has constantly and dynamically to affirm and actualize his existence in self-knowledge and self-realization. Man is thus a being suspended between nothingness and the plenitude of being. Man is *"homo viator"* (Gabriel Marcel), never at the goal, but always on the way; he may, to use Goethe's words, "become what he is," or he may fall away from his authentic self.

The term "existence" was first understood and used in this sense of *authentic* existence by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Kierkegaard in particular, by the profound analysis of "existence" and existential thinking (in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* 1846), has fathered existentialism in contemporary theology and philosophy. The "crisis theology" or "dialectical theology" of Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr is no less indebted to the Danish thinker than the existential philosophy of Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, and Marcel. But while "dialectical theology" is primarily concerned with the precarious existential situation of the individual Christian facing the "Eternal Word" of Christian revelation, Kierkegaard's main concern is the possibility of man's self-realization: to what extent, he asks, can man realize himself and save himself by withdrawing from the irresponsibility, superficiality, and forgetfulness of everyday life? Existence, then, is for Kierkegaard the attainment of self-possession in the spiritually directed and determined life of the individual. And "existential thinking" is the vital thought-process by which the concrete human individual appropriates that Truth which for the arm-chair philosopher and the systematizer remains an abstract proposition, compelling no existential assent.

★

EXISTENTIALISM in all its forms is keenly aware of an element of insecurity that attaches to all purely philosophical knowledge. This awareness is the strength of existential thinking, but it may become its weakness if the subject's share in the establishment of philosophic certitude is exaggerated. Philosophic knowledge is never as complete and final as an article of theological faith or a mathematical equation. Far from being allowed to rest securely on its past and present accomplishments, philosophy is thrown back again and again to its original queries, to the initial stages of its struggle for certitude.

Time and again philosophers have tried to emulate theology and science, in attempts to eliminate this element of insecurity and instability. The representatives of the *philosophia perennis* went farthest in laying a solid groundwork for rational certitude, but in the end they had to resign themselves to the fact that their discipline lacked complete self-sufficiency and remained ultimately *ancilla theologiae.* Descartes, Spinoza and, to some extent, Kant tried to impart to philosophy the impregnability of mathematics, while modern and contemporary positivists and neo-positivists (logical empiricists, semanticists) have aimed at establishing philosophy as a branch of the experimental sciences, and the German idealists proposed to get rid of the troublesome concrete subject by immersing it in a "general consciousness" (Kant) or in an absolute, universal ego (Fichte, Hegel). But the concrete human being eventually rebelled against all these attempts to dispose of his dynamic subjectivity. Existential philosophy poses anew the problem of individuality and personality and the part the philosopher plays in the establishment of philosophic certitude. Existentialism calls attention to the fact that philosophy is a truly human discipline precisely because it always includes venture and risk and reflects in both its sublimity and frailty the ambivalence of human existence.

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EXISTENTIALISM insists that no valid philosophic question can be asked and answered unless both question and answer take into account the concrete existence of the questioner. That being, called "man," who asks philosophical questions wants first of all to know what he is and where he stands. And why is he so anxiously and vitally concerned with his own existence? Simply because by his very nature he is a questioning being, a philosophical creature. The irrational animal, on the other hand, is essentially unphilosophical: it does not question the meaning of its existence nor the meaning of its surrounding world. It merely accepts both and uses them to the best of its ability.

Man is thus, existentialism tells us, at the core of every philosophical quest. With him philosophy begins, and with him it ends. He may cling to it as to a guide, and then it may lead him to the depths of his own self. Or it may beckon to him as a lure to intellectual adventure, and then he may eventually lose his self and be led

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to existential disintegration. For Plato and Thomas Aquinas philosophy acted as a guide to wisdom and virtue; for Nietzsche and Sartre it was to become a lure into adventure and into the abyss of self-destruction. But there may be greatness even in philosophic negation and existential despair if, as in Nietzsche's case, this attitude is inspired by a passionate sincerity, supported by a willingness to bear all the consequences, and hallowed by a sacrificial self-immolation. In other words, an attitude of existential despair may still be called philosophical as long as this despair does not consume the thinker's *philo-sophia,* his "love of wisdom" or his "wisdom of love," as long as he remains attuned to the mysterious heartbeat of Reality. The uncritical dogmatism of the arm-chair thinker, and the smug and irreverent scepticism of the nihilist are, however, equally sterile and unphilosophical.

The rational appetite, impelled by the light of reason, gropes for light and shrinks from darkness, and it cannot be at rest until it has illumined that massive darkness which veils and shrouds Reality. The human heart is described by Saint Augustine as a restless heart, constantly beset by the weight of truth, a truth incarnate in the eternal Source of all Truth and Light and Love.

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BECAUSE philosophy becomes lightless and listless when it disregards this restlessly striving and loving human heart, the existential philosopher finds in Descartes's *"cogito, ergo sum"* (I think, therefore I am) or *"sum res cogitans"* (I am a thinking substance) a very inexhaustive description of the human self. The 'I am,' he argues, is much more than the 'I think'; the human self is much more than *'res cogitans,'* and the Cartesian formula is therefore inconclusive unless the ego understands himself, in Kierkegaard's sense, as a subject discovering in introspection his existential and essential relationship to an Absolute Subject and, by virtue of this discovery, becomes actually what he is potentially: a human being.

This opposition to Cartesian rationalism and idealism explains the predilection shown by some existential thinkers for the pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece, and especially for Heraclitus (ca. 500 B.C.). While Kierkegaard praises Socrates as a philosopher whose existence fully and adequately expressed the Socratic ideas of truth and goodness, others (Nietzsche, Heidegger) find fault with the Greek philosopher's rationalism and give preference to those thinkers who preceded him and in whom they claim to find a more complete understanding of man and the world. The results of the most recent research seem to confirm this claim.

The major problem in the speculation of Heraclitus concerns the self-analysis, the self-understanding of the human being, that is, the basic problem of a genuine anthropology. Unlike Descartes and his successors, but very much like Saint Augustine and the leading schoolmen of the Middle Ages, the Greek philosopher was interested in the totality of man and of reality, not primarily in human consciousness and human knowledge. Heraclitus describes the soul of the philosopher as being related to "the eternally living fire," a relationship which enables him to recognize within his own self the reflection of divine wisdom. These anthropological views are grounded in cosmology and theology. "For Heraclitus," writes Werner Jaeger, "the human heart is the passionately feeling and active center in which all the forces of the cosmos meet and fuse." Human existence, to gain a real possession of itself, must gather itself from distraction, and such self-collection cannot pass by the world but must proceed *in* the world and *through* the world.

The common characteristic of all men, according to Heraclitus, is the possibility of *phronesis,* that is, reflection or introspection. Man enters into the state of *phronesis* when he collects himself in the tranquil contemplation of truth as it speaks to him in the voice of nature and in the voice of his own deep and enduring selfhood. But while this kind of existence is potentially open to all, it is actually sought and chosen by but a few. The multitude remains immersed in the distractions of life. These few are the *aristoi,* the best, while the many are termed the *hoi polloi,* Kierkegaard's "featureless crowd," Jasper's "masses," Heidegger's *"das Man."* The crowd does not understand, learn, know, or remember anything, but it believes it knows everything. As a crowd and in the crowd human beings become forgetful of what it means to listen and to speak. They become like the deaf, of whom it is said that "though present, they are absent" (*Herman Diels, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*).

Eyes and ears are poor witnesses in men who have the souls of barbarians. But the most reprehensible feature of their way of life is what Heraclitus calls *hybris,* that is, their presumptuous pride. Although they behave like children or irrational animals, they are really inferior to the animal which moves with instinctive certainty within its natural orbit, whereas a human existence is bound to transcend its natural orbit positively or negatively: choosing, forming, creating, or failing to choose, to form, and to create. For whatever is or becomes depends on what man chooses to make, or fails to make, of his natural vitality. Karl Jaspers merely elaborates this Heraclitean thesis when he points out that the man who chooses to descend to the level of the brute becomes not an animal but less than an

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animal, "an existence shaken by despair, lacking that power and certainty which the animal possesses." However, the animal-like gregarious man, the man who has disappeared in the crowd, resembles the brute in that he, too, accepts life without questioning, without authentic choices, without actual command over his destiny.

★

THE MANY resemblances which the Heraclitean concept of man and his "being-in-the-world" bears to the existentialist point of view are obvious. There is lacking, however, in the Heraclitean anthropology the "metaphysical category" of Kierkegaard's "individual," who *ek-sists* (i.e., "stands out") against the universal claims and demands of the *polis* (the state, the world, civilization). For Heraclitus no less than for Hegel the individual is ultimately absorbed by the political and social universal.

Phronesis, or the introspective listening to the truth of being in nature and in the self, is in the opinion of Heraclitus the way to gain knowledge of that cosmic norm which he calls *Logos.* "All human laws are nurtured by the one divine law, for this divine law commands whatever it wills, and prevails above all else." Knowledge of the cosmic norm (the *Logos*) teaches man that all cosmic events express in their dialectical movement the eternally changing nature of the aboriginal cosmic "fire." However, the main accent of the Heraclitean metaphysics lies not, as has often been asserted, on the external flux of all things. Although the world often looks "like a disorderly heap of rubbish," this foreground appearance merely veils the hidden harmony of being, and true *phronesis* would be impossible if there were not recognizable in all becoming a normative measure, proportion, order, or law.

In the anthropology of Heraclitus, as in the existential "humanism" of Jean-Paul Sartre, man finds himself sufficiently rewarded for his relentless striving by the possibility of freely "making himself," by discovering in the *logos* of his own existence what Saint Augustine called the *profunda, immensa, infinita aula memoriae,* the tremendous reaches of his existential selfhood in the appropriation of his past, in his actualized present, and in his projected future.

★

THIS DISCUSSION of some of the basic concepts in the thinking of Heraclitus seems to warrant the conclusion that *existentialism* is a new name applied to a philosophic attitude or method that is not only very old but actually timeless in its significance. The existential philosopher, whether ancient or modern, proclaims and teaches a truth which is all too often lost sight of: that it is the end of philosophy to furnish a way of life rather than to present an abstract doctrine, and that the genuine philosopher vouches for the authenticity of his thinking with his existence rather than with his "system."

In a lecture delivered at the University of Louvain, Gabriel Marcel told his audience that "not a day passes without someone (generally a woman of culture, but perhaps a janitor or a street-car conductor) asking me what existentialism is. No one will be surprised that I evade the question. I reply that it is too difficult or too long to explain. All one can do is to try to elucidate the key-notion of it, not to formulate a definition." This key-note is stressed by Martin Heidegger when he writes: "We are used to looking for philosophic thought in the form of the extraordinary, which is only accessible to the initiated. We conceive of thought in the way of scientific knowledge and its research projects. . . . It is time to rid ourselves of an over-estimation of philosophy which demands of it the impossible. What we need in the present plight of the world is less 'philosophy' and more care in thinking; less 'literature' and a greater care in the cultivation of language and letters." Thought is only "a preliminary tool." It is a tool that may aid man in his self-realization and thus in the fulfillment of his human destiny.

Immigration from Asia

Time to lower the "bar sinister of color"

HERB GORDON

DURING the height of the war in Italy, a Nisei soldier was killed in the battle for control of the Anzio beachhead. A letter was found in his pocket, a letter so impressive the army subsequently had it reprinted:

> Think not too cheaply of your life; it is precious. Live it as you can in the service of your country—for what good is a lifeless soldier? Be ever careful, cautious, but never begrudge your life for your country; be ever willing to die for her if need be. Then, and only then, when we know you have given your all, done your best, can I say that my son lived well. Only then can I say to others: "Did I (not) tell you he was a good son?"

Surely, such a letter written by a father to an American soldier in combat was not too rare during the war. But this soldier's father was not an American citizen. He was, in fact, even then confined behind barbed wire in an American War Relocation Camp for persons of Japanese ancestry.

That father is still an alien. He cannot become a citizen in a land where he has lived for almost 30 years; a country for which his son gave his life in battle.

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As he cannot become a citizen, neither can Eddie Imazu, art director for MGM studios in Hollywood, a man as "American" as the Mickey Rooney pictures he directs. Nor can Mrs. Sada Munemori, of Los Angeles, whose son, Pvt. Sadao S. Munemori, received this nation's highest military award, the Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumously.

Nor, without naming them individually, can almost 90,000 other Oriental immigrants who came to the United States or Hawaii prior to the ill-conceived Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924. A substantial majority of these persons are Japanese, a few thousand are Koreans, and the remainder Polynesians or from South East Asia territories.

How a vast number of such persons feel was well summed up by K. Saibara, a pioneer rice grower in Webster, Texas., in a statement to a Congressional Subcommittee which held hearings last year on the Judd Bill to remove racist bars in America's immigration and naturalization laws. . . . "America has been my adopted home for 44 years, without even once returning to the old country. My grandparents lived and died here; my parents lived and died here; my wife lived and died here. All my remaining loved ones live here. I want to live here, too, and be a useful citizen. I have waited for 44 years to become an American citizen. Has my waiting been in vain? I hope not."

Robert S. Kuwahara, the creator of a cartoon strip called "Miki," is an active resident in the community of Larchmont, New York; yet because he was born in Japan, he is denied citizenship in the United States. What does this mean to him? . . . "We are wholly submerged in community activities. My wife is actively engaged in local Red Cross, PTA and school library, and our social circle is quite extensive. This is my country. But for a hazy memory I know no other. I would like to tell my children that I am an American like them. I would like to get up and voice my opinions, and exercise my rights as a citizen, and that I cannot do as an alien."

★

THE JUDD BILL (H R 199), introduced by Rep. Walter H. Judd (R., Minn.), passed by the House of Representatives March 1, is designed to help such persons as Mrs. Munemori and Mr. Kuwahara. Briefly, the bill which is now before the Senate has two major objectives: The first is to give every alien legally entitled to reside in this country the right to apply for citizenship. And, second, to make immigration quotas available to all Asian and Pacific peoples under the national origins provisions of the 1924 Act.

One of the most encouraging things about House action on the bill was the wholehearted approval by Representatives who discussed it on the floor. Not a voice was raised in opposition. The *Pacific Citizen,* weekly newspaper of the Japanese American Citizens League, was sufficiently impressed by what happened in the House to comment:

> One could only wonder at the cordiality, the unanimity of feeling, the atmosphere of restraint and good will. After all . . . in America where we have become used to explosive, violent and often acrimonious debate when minority races are discussed in the halls of Congress, this attitude seemed somehow more than a little strange.
>
> One waited for the old, old clichés of the "yellow peril" voices of the past to make themselves heard. And only towards the end when the House was about to vote, did one actually realize the truth—that such voices *do* belong to the past. . . .

To understand the Judd Bill, it is necessary to review its two major provisions separately: immigration and naturalization. America's first naturalization laws, of 1790, offered the privilege of becoming a naturalized citizens to "free white" persons. In 1870 the law was amended to permit persons of African ancestry to apply for citizenship. The next major change was in 1940 when persons of races indigenous to North and South America were given naturalization rights. In 1943, naturalization rights were granted to the Chinese, and in 1946 to the Indians (Oriental) and Filipinos. Early in the 1920's, the Supreme Court held that citizenship rights had to be granted specifically by Congress.

On the other hand, immigration has always been permitted by the United States unless specifically denied by Congress. The first effort to halt immigration into the United States was the obviously discriminatory Chinese Exclusion Act of 1885, aimed at only the Chinese. In 1909, our government and the Japanese government formulated an unwritten "gentlemen's agreement" which slowed to a trickle the flow of immigrant Japanese laborers into the United States. The next major change was the formulation of the national quota theories in the 1924 Act. Under this Act, all Asian and Pacific island peoples were excluded from the United States.

★

IN EFFECT, the Judd bill would give the Asiatic countries and Pacific island peoples still excluded the right to utilize quotas, roughly an annual immigration of 1/6 of one percent of the number of persons from that country living in the United States in 1920, or a minimum of 100, whichever is larger. Under this formula, Japan would be given a quota of 185 persons annually. All other countries affected by the Judd bill, such as Bhutan, Nauru, Nepal, Samoa, Siam, Indonesia, Korea and the Pacific islands formerly mandated to Japan, would receive the minimum quota of 100 annually.

When he discussed the Judd Bill before a Congressional Committee last year, Joseph C. Grew, former United States Ambassador to Japan, said that the exclusion laws were "based on two premises which time has proved to be in error: (a) That the people of the Far East and especially the Japanese are not assimilable, and therefore would not be loyal to the United States in the event of war with Japan, and (b) These people maintained a lower standard of living and . . . created economic problems.

"The war," he said, "effectively disposed of the first

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convention. . . . You may recall that General Marshall's report as Chief of Staff singled out the (all Japanese American) 442nd Infantry combat team for special citation for bravery. Time is disposing of the second contention. Today the Nisei, together with their parents, are living in all sections of the country, and it is entirely safe to say that their standards are those of the communities in which they live."

There is little doubt that the anti-Oriental immigration and naturalization laws were largely the work of the West Coast, and primarily of California. Since the end of the war, though, there has been a surprising change of sentiment in the Golden State. California representatives, both Democratic and Republican, spoke for the Judd Bill in Congress.

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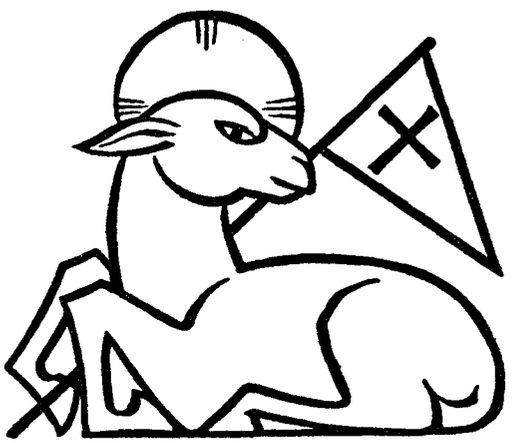
TWO SECTIONS of the Judd Bill are admittedly open to question. Heretofore, colonies have participated in the quotas of their mother countries. The proposed act would limit the use of mother country quotas by colonies to 100 each year per colony. This would sharply restrict the immigration of West Indians. Some 2,500 have been migrating to this country annually under the British quota of almost 66,000.

Another section would prohibit wives and children coming in quota-free from any country with a quota of less than 200 a year. This prohibition would affect not only Asian and Pacific countries given quotas for the first time, but would remove Chinese wives, and the wives and children of Filipinos, Australians, New Zealanders and some 41 other "under 200-quota" countries from quota-free status.

The Judd Bill would allow no flood of immigration into the United States. The best opinion is that fewer than 1,000 persons a year would enter from the Orient. Its chief effect will be to permit thousands of Mrs. Munemoris and Mr. Kuwahara's to apply for citizenship. It is time the "bar sinister of color" is removed from these laws; time indeed, to practice the democracy we are preaching.

Symbols of Christ

The Lamb of God



"He was offered, because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before the shearer, and He shall not open His mouth" (*Is.* 53:7).
"The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him, and he said: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" **(*John* 1:29).**
"And I saw: and behold, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as if slain . . ." (*Apoc.* 5:6).

★

THE LAMB is innocent, gentle, guileless. It puts complete trust in the shepherd, whose voice it knows, and whom it follows in meek obedience. When led to the slaughter it opens not its mouth, but confidently walks where it is led.

In Old Covenant times God, the Good Shepherd, chose Israel as His beloved lamb. It listened to His voice on Mount Sinai and followed Him through the desert to the pastures of the Promised Land. Why was it, then, that only the blood of the lamb was able to save Israel in Egypt, and that every morning and evening a lamb had to be offered for the sins of the people (*Ex.* 29:39)? This was done to indicate that when the sheep had strayed, and had gone each his own way, One would come, the *true* Lamb, the *true* Israel of God, to be stricken for our transgressions (*Is.* 53). Indeed, God's beloved Son descended from heaven, and, by becoming the Son of David, was made the Lamb of God. Innocent in His Divine splendor, gentle in His human lowliness, guileless, as befits the Truth, He opened not His mouth when led to the slaughter. On Calvary our Paschal Lamb was sacrificed, yet remained victorious.

Seated on God's throne, the Lamb becomes the Shepherd who guides the new flock unto the fountains of the waters of life (*Apoc.* 7:16). His lambs are those who listen to His voice in faith, drink the clear waters of the Spirit from the fountains of Baptism, and feed on the pasture of the Eucharist. During their earthly life they are "reckoned no better than sheep marked down for the slaughter" (*Rom.* 8:36), till the final triumph of the Lamb. Then, skipping over the hills of eternity, they will sing the new song of the Lamb.

DAMASUS WINZEN.

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The Stage & Screen

Detective Story

I DON'T THINK Sidney Kingsley's play precisely works and, moreover, I don't think it embraces his theme as stated in the *Times* drama section of last Sunday. As I understand it from this interview in the *Times*, the author wishes to project through his play a warning about the Police States in the world; a warning to a democratic public to keep stern control over their own Police powers. But what he presents us with in his story of a Detective is the portrait of a megalomaniac, whose moral flaw is so thoroughly recognized by his superiors and by his fellow-workers that his defeat is almost apparent from the start.

Detective McLeod is strangely no politician. He is, however, an efficient fearless Detective. He is also a self-constituted judge of all men, and of the institutions and practice of law under our form of government. He is further, and for reasons which I could only find superficially examined, a hater of his own father. The author presents this official in a major instance of rigorously re-prosecuting an illegal doctor, in which action he resorts to violence in lack of evidence. When he learns that his wife has had occasion, a good while in the past, to resort to the practices of this doctor, he is still unable to temper justice with mercy. His "ideal" marriage dissolves; his obviously adolescent principles hold; and he goes down in a very small and contrived crash.

I had better explain that Mr. Kingsley's dramatic method for getting at this character is panoramic. His scene is the most crowded detective squad room of a New York precinct ever attempted in fiction or on the stage. Until the first curtain, I should say the exterior doings—the doings of the other officials, the visitations from neighborhood cranks, the actions of lawyers, the actions of felons brought in, and of merely misdemeaning people—all these exterior doings do have a very definite interest. However, I don't believe the method is successful over three long acts. The scene becomes distracted; and however well documented, and however well handled by a director, the plan is one to develop a stereotype rather than any recognizable experience. It is, of course, only recognizable experience which will in any way comprehend Mr. Kingsley's declared theme. The apprehensions of, and the operations of "Police States" are present facts in an enormous portion of the world. I only wish the author could have wrought his play so as to have examined these facts.

On the acting end, I thought Ralph Bellamy did very well in the title rôle. In the part of the Wife, Meg Mundy is not so successful but warms considerably in her second and final scene. A great number of the thirty-odd minor people—notably Lee Grant, Jean Adair, Alexander Scourby, and Robert Strauss—are excellent. Boris Aronson's set is the neatest of the year. (*At the Hudson.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Action! Camera! Shoot!

WE HAVE a group of fast moving films for consideration this week; several of them deserve longer reviews than they are getting below, but the time has come again for your critic to get caught up with the sudden rush of releases that keep our screens on the go.

The Set-Up, based on a poem by Joseph March and expertly directed by Robert Wise, is probably the grimmest and most realistic prize-fight picture ever made. It tells about the last fight of a not-so-young pugilist (Robert Ryan) whose wife (Audrey Totter) begs him to give up this precarious business and whose manager (George Tobias) has accepted fifty dollars on condition that the fighter take a dive after the second round. Ryan wins, and after the fight he is so brutally beaten by the opponent's backers that he can never fight again. So his wife wins too. This film is so well done that you can smell the sweat in the dressing rooms and feel each blow as it lands. You will hate the sadistic fight crowd who howl for blood, and you leave the theater exhausted, wondering if realism for its own sake serves a purpose.

City Across the River will arouse similar doubts about the value of realism. I suppose the makers of this film, about juvenile delinquency in Brooklyn, were sincere in their motives; but they have succeeded in making one of the most unpleasant movies I've seen. It blames mainly the crowded slums for the criminal behavior of these Brooklyn delinquents, one gang in particular known as the Amboy Dukes. You've gotta be tough to survive in this neighborhood is their defense; and surviving seems to mean being vicious and going as far as murder. Practically no solution is offered other than tearing down our slums.

Bad Boy, which handles the same problem and at times as realistically, has the great advantage of being positive in its suggestions for cures. The delinquent, effectively played by Audie Murphy, lands on the Variety Clubs' ranch in Texas and gets the complete overhauling treatment under the ranch's director (Lloyd Nolan) who is assisted by his wife (Jane Wyatt) and an overseer (James Gleason). The psychological background built up for the boy is a little naive, but the psychology used at the ranch is extremely effective, and so is the movie both as entertainment and as a worthy study of what's to be done about the problem.

Cover Up is concerned with a small-town murder mystery that is finally solved by an insurance investigator (Dennis O'Keefe). What keeps the picture from being completely smothered in typical folksy clichés is the rather ambiguous ending which suggests that the sheriff (William Bendix) knew all the time who-dun-it. I'm not sure whether the film means to defend murder, but in any case the whole thing is so slow and uninspired that it doesn't merit your investigating.

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Impact starts out excitingly enough with a situation in which a millionaire (Brian Donlevy) is almost killed by his wife's lover. He is more upset by the wife's infidelity than by the bruises he receives. After the first few thrills, the picture wanders on and on endlessly with a plot involving the girl (Ella Raines) for whom the millionaire works as a garage mechanlic and a detective (Charles Coburn) who never gives up. The solution is not worth the plodding details through which you have to sit.

Outpost in Morocco shows us the Foreign Legion in action; and although this action is active enough, the picture as a whole is more dull than bad. Hero George Raft and his lieutenant (Akim Tamiroff) and all the boys tangle with the Emir of Bel-Rashad (Eduard Franz) and his well-sheeted followers. There's something of a romance between Raft and the emir's daughter (Marie Windsor) but this is blown up in the big climax when the girl and her father and a lot of Arabs ride into the Legion's trap of exploding mines. "Beau Geste" did it better.

Siren of Atlantis, with practically the same African setting, sends several of the Foreign Legion boys (Jean Pierre Aumont, Dennis O'Keefe) into the never-never land known as the lost continent of Atlantis, which in case you didn't know it was right in the middle of the Sahara. The boys get there all right, but what happens shouldn't happen even to a movie star. The place is ruled by a vicious, wicked beauty (Maria Montez) who lives on love and has the corpses of her rejected boyfriends preserved in gold. Without half trying this movie soon becomes a parody of itself, but it's not as funny as a good comedy.

Alias Nick Beal is a much more successful attempt at fantasy, mainly because John Farrow knows how to direct a movie to hold our interest and how to mix fantasy with realism to make it acceptable. The story is sort of a modern Faust piece in which District Attorney Thomas Mitchell sells his soul to the devil (played by Ray Milland in street clothes) and then lives to regret his transaction. Audrey Totter acts as Ray's assistant; and the battle that wages between good and evil is more exciting than most gangster or horse-opera thrillers.

South of St. Louis shows how a horse opera can get so pretentious and involved in plot that it loses its effectiveness. Joel McCrea, Zachary Scott and Douglas Kennedy, first as ranchers then as gun-runners for the South, are kept so busy keeping up with this crowded Civil War story that they hardly have time to finish the quarrels they start among themselves or those with the villains. Since cinema is most at home with a western, it is too bad that all this talent was wasted so expensively.

El Paso, which starts at the end of the Civil War, represents an even greater waste of talent. Its elaborate cast don't even succeed in making sense out of a muddled story; and all the fights, brawls, riding and tough carry-

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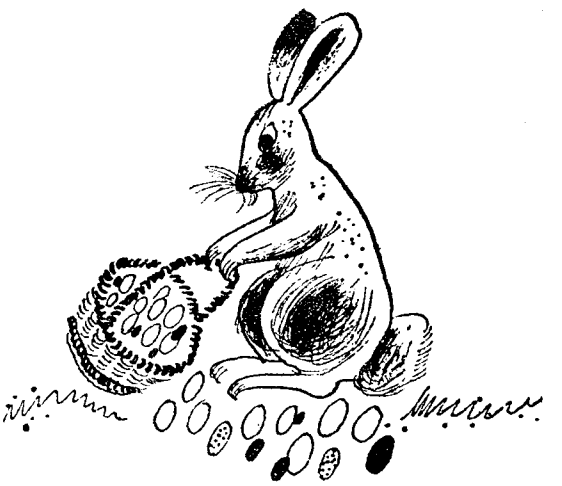

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ing-on just seem to be thrown at us for irresponsible fight-for-fight's-sake reasons. I suppose John Payne, Gail Russell, Sterling Hayden try hard enough, but their best is none too good; and you ask yourself as you leave long before the finale: "What's all the shooting for?"

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books

Saint Paul: Envoy of Grace. Robert Sencourt. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

"I AM GRIEVED and pained that all men do not know this man as they ought to know him; . . . It is not through any natural readiness or sharpness of wit that even I know as much as I do—if indeed I do know anything—but owing to a constant drawing towards him and an earnest affection." These words of John Chrysostom, which Mr. Sencourt has set before his life of the Apostle, are borne out by the loving and vivid picture he draws of Saint Paul as man of genius rather than vessel of election. He shows less the workings of grace in his soul than the workings of his mind. His writing has unusual vigor and freshness, conveying much enthusiasm, and his extensive treatment of the Epistles is based on an impressive knowledge of the relevant literature, ranging from Renan and Kirsopp Lake, through Sanday, Headlam and Ramsay, to Prat and Holzner, Ramsay being his preferred authority. Many passages from the Acts and the Epistles are given in a stimulating free translation.

There is not a dull sentence in the book, but there are quite a number of questionable ones. To pick a few: Aquila is called an Armenian Jew; of Ananias, the high priest, it is said that his white robe contrasted with his "coarse Jewish features," the elders accompanying Ananias to the governor, Felix, to press the case against St. Paul are depicted as "ministers of the Christian Church." Mr. Sencourt finds it "hard to say" "how far the followers of Jesus had then [at the time of St. Paul's conversion] made their religion precise." He speaks of St. Stephen as "the naked young man," and says also of those who stoned him that they were naked.

Mr. Sencourt is guided by "the belief that the books of the New Testament are, as documents, more important than the theories of critics about them." This is one of many hopeful signs of a return to tradition in the biblical field, which is a return to sanity, and a glad sign that the higher critics have lost much of their repute; but one wishes they had been shown to be what they are. Much of higher criticism is the wild imaginings of men with no imagination, the revolt against greatness on the part of a small century. It is not only, in the happy phrase of Solomon Schechter, "higher anti-Semitism," but also *ressentiment* against Truth and the Absolute, masked as scholarship.

Similarly, Mr. Sencourt brings to life the Greco-Roman world, but he fails in his evaluation of the statements by Roman writers on the Jews. He cites in all earnestness Cicero's speech for Flaccus, in which the great orator referred to their influence in a hushed voice and said that it took courage to run counter to them—but this was a lawyer's trick. He takes at face value the sneers of

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antique writers at Jewish "smelliness and dirt," "pale complexion" and "unmistakable lines of nose and eyes and lips"; when he mentions the Roman criticisms of Jewish exclusiveness, their seclusion, their Sabbaths and feasts, he overlooks completely what is hidden behind these objections: the pagan grudge against the one and true religion, against the uncompromising worship of the God who is Spirit. The grudge against and distaste for the Jews, who had withdrawn from the world, was in many ways the same as the contempt the "enlightened" today have for the monk.

A final remark: this book is the third of a series called "Great Writers of the World," the other two of which are on Horace and Boccaccio. No doubt, St. Paul wrote well, very well, because the love of Christ compelled him, but he is not one of the "great writers." The rank of an Apostle is so singular that, particularly in our age which levels all things and blurs distinctions, we dare not confound it. Despite all these cautions, no one reading the book can help being drawn closer to the Apostle and feeling his affection for him grow.

JOHN M. OESTERREICHER.

The Norwayman. Joseph O'Connor. Macmillan. $3.50.

I FEEL that this novel—a selection of the Thomas More Book Club and the Catholic Book Club—is actually half novel and half collection of short sketches and descriptive pieces. Mr. O'Connor is not a skilled novelist. His haste, his summary disposal of some of his characters and his overly-rapid shifts of focus evidence his impatience with his chosen medium. But in spite of all this I stayed up until after midnight to finish his book!

He tells a simple story of simple fishing folk. Yet he sees freshly and he writes, as it were, eagerly. He can hardly wait to tell you what happens; and a great deal does happen—now quietly, now loudly—to his just-married young couple. Mike McGillicuddy and Maire Horgan, having just been made man and wife, go to live on tiny Shark Island, off the Irish coast—"the loneliest gobbet of land in the West, dropped carelessly from a giant mouth into the sea." But they are not lonely. Father John Miles, parish priest in the little village on the mainland, whom they visit and who visits them to bless their new boat; Knut Ollsen, the Norwayman whom they rescue from the sea, and who, finding himself in love with Maire, goes away, never to return; Mai Hogan, the village siren who lives with them on the island, until they are able to "arrange" a marriage for her; Joany, the housekeeper who knows the Seven Major Tales and the Seven Minor Tales (and strikes suddenly into your mind with the remark that Saint Peter, "a big saint," was "an Italian or a Jew or something"); John Joe Barrett, who never lost control of his impulses, "indeed, he never had impulses, all his actions being considered and objective" (an acute sketching here of the eternal Looker-out-for-No.-1); the Reverend Father Patrick Boyle, "a by-product of the new Gaelic education, which tends to create a lop-sided mentality in children . . . for him religion was as fixed, certain and commonplace as arithmetic and daylight and farming"—all these people, and more, walk and drift into the lives of the lobster fisherman and his wife.

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There are sharply pertinent comments here. Mike tells his wife that "money is good only at the moment you spend it. It is a dead thing the moment before you spend it and it goes into death the moment after." And Maire McGillicuddy says to Father Miles, "You see very clearly what lies ahead of you, but you don't see what runs beside you." To the Norwayman she puts a delightful question: "Didn't you ever hear what St. Patrick said to St. Shaughlin? Shaughlin was St. Patrick's favorite disciple, and when he asked where he would build his new church the wise old saint advised him well. 'Build it,' says he, 'near enough for our love for each other, and far enough for our respect for each other.'"

You'll like this book. Though it isn't a whodunit, you'll keep wanting to see what-happens-next. Perhaps there is something detective-like about some of our motions. And perhaps there are more criminals than are dreamt of in Scotland Yard. MURRAY HICKEY LEY.

A Spiritual Aeneid. Ronald Knox. Newman Press. $3.00 (*cloth*), $1.00 (*paper*).

ONCE AGAIN the Newman Press earns the gratitude of all Christian people by republishing at low cost this "religious autobiography" of Monsignor Ronald Knox. Many Catholics own and cherish his translation of the New Testament, and many more hear its virile English every Sunday without knowing of their benefactor; scholars eagerly follow his progress in the rest of the great work to which he has given the past ten years; older ones remember his gift of fun and story-telling. Here is his own story.

Every convert has to work his passage. For one born and bred in the very heart of Anglicanism (Knox père was a bishop) and trained in its Oxford tradition, the passage could not be a smooth one. That is what gives this book its historical importance. American readers will find themselves in a world that is very foreign to them—the English are born foreigners to everyone, including themselves—but they can gain here an understanding of both the weakness and the strength of the Anglican heritage on its native soil that few other works can give them. "Anglicanism," says Fr. Knox, "is not a system of religion nor a body of truth, but a feeling, a tradition, its roots intertwined with associations of national history and of family life; you do not learn it, you grow into it; you do not forget it, you grow out of it." That is a painful process, demanding both intellectual and emotional objectivity in a difficult degree.

Roman Catholics may pardonably feel that the problems of the "Anglo-Catholic" are none of their business: the definition of faith, the nature and location of authority, the question of the sacraments and the succession. For the long run, I am not so sure; a missionary Church needs to know its territory. And the convert may no less pardonably wish that more of his brethren could

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understand the strained heart, the scarred feet, of the long road home—and the ultimate music of that call from the storm's dead-center, Rise, clasp My hand, and Come.

Here is an echo of it for festal meditation: "I had been encouraged to suppose, and fully prepared to find, that the immediate result of submission to Rome would be the sense of having one's liberty cramped and restricted in a number of ways, necessary no doubt to the welfare of the Church at large, but galling to the individual. . . . The curious thing is that my experience has been exactly the opposite. I have been overwhelmed by the feeling of liberty—the glorious liberty of the sons of God." W. A. ORTON.

Dostoevsky. Andre Gide. New Directions. $2.50.

THIS IS A REPRINT of a book first published in French in 1923 and in 1925. It is a warm appreciation of the great Russian author by a Frenchman wholly attuned to him. Gide's enthusiasm when he first came upon him in the early twenties was so great that he promptly felt moved to deliver a series of lectures, which were eventually published in an English translation with an Introduction by Arnold Bennett, who shared Gide's enthusiasm and agreed with him that *The Brothers Karamazov* was the greatest novel ever written. In Bennett's opinion, Dostoevsky and Gide "were made for each other—or rather Dostoevsky was made for Gide." It scarcely need be said after this that Gide's small book on Dostoevsky throws as much light on Gide as it does on the Russian writer.

It is not a well-constructed or well-written book. It is fragmentary and repetitious. There is almost as much quotation here from Dostoevsky as commentary by Gide. In a sense, this defect is a merit as far as readers not fully acquainted with Dostoevsky are concerned. For Dostoevsky in the course of his writings has said a great deal that explains himself, and Gide has culled wisely and pertinently.

While Gide touches on Dostoevsky's creativeness, he primarily stresses the psychological, sociological and religious aspects of his work, which have most puzzled the average reader; above all, he discusses the duality of human beings, which so greatly obsessed Dostoevsky, who suffered this duality in exaggerated form himself.

Dostoevsky as a prophet also interests Gide. But it surely requires no special perspicacity to realize that Dostoevsky prophesied Bolshevism, whose seeds were somewhere in the Russian soul; no one understood this better than the author of *The Possessed,* who prefaced his novel with a motto from Luke: the story of the Gadarene swine. JOHN COURNOS.

Who's Who in Labor. Edited by Marion Dickerman and Ruth Taylor. Dryden Press. $12.

WHO'S WHO IN LABOR was published some time ago, but it looks as though it is going to be the only book of its kind, which means invaluable, for some time to come, so I do not hesitate to call it to the attention of anyone who wants a first-rate labor reference book.

It consists of "the authorized biographies of the men and women who lead labor in the U. S. and Canada and

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Don't start murmuring that, or you will go on for days, to the distress of your friends. It's the beginning of a description of a whale (All right, so he wouldn't know himself, but who cares?) which occurs in **GLEE-WOOD, Margaret Williams' Treasury of Middle English Literature** ($6.00)—a gorgeous book. What she has done is to choose the best of the best and most representative things written in prose and verse from the Norman Conquest to Henry VIIIth, translate them into modern English (superbly, they tell us) and add a running commentary of her own on the background of the writer —what the England of his day was like, and so on. There is a gratifying amount of more or less natural history in it, a good deal of religion, and a spot of most other things. A heavenly collection.

You can go from **GLEE-WOOD** to **FROST FOR ST. BRIGID,** by **Sister Maris Stella** ($1.75), without shock: her poem on the Resurrection that ends

The Paschal candle of the Spring is lit
And all the earth is glorified with it

goes well, if not with Cathegrande, with much else in **GLEE-WOOD.** Sister Maris Stella means you to enjoy reading her poems and you do. It may be very old-fashioned, lowbrow and generally reprehensible of us, but we like to enjoy poetry. (That's why we published **Robert Farren's HOW TO ENJOY POETRY** ($3.00)—it may not make converts from inveterate poetry-haters, but it will increase anyone's range of poetry-enjoyment.)

Anyone going to Fatima this summer? If so (or, indeed, if not), he could do worse than read **PORTUGUESE PILGRIMAGE** ($2.75), **Father Martindale's** account of two months spent in Portugal. As usual, he contrived to see and understand more than most of us would have in two years, and he slips in a spot or two of the history of the country, for good measure. Fatima is the heart of his book (as he says it is of Portugal), but not the whole of it. All three of these books are already published; let no bookseller tell you otherwise.

It is some time since we asked Commonweal readers if they get their copies of **Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET** all right. This, in case you don't know what we're talking about, is the review we publish every two or three months, giving news of authors, extracts from unpublished books, reviews of new books, pictures and poems. We send it free and postpaid on the theory that it may lead unwary readers to wander into a bookstore and buy a book or two. If you don't get the Trumpet and don't mind the risk, send a postcard to Constance McGill at this address

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If labor is your field, you need a copy of *Who's Who in Labor*. You can get along without knowing Phil Murray's favorite sports, but if you can get along without everything in this book, you are an expert indeed.

J. C. CORT.

Churches: Their Plan and Furnishing. Peter F. Anson. Revised and edited by the Very Rev. Thomas F. Croft-Fraser and the Rev. H. A. Reinhold. Bruce. $6.50.

IT MAY seem strange to begin a review of this helpful book by saying that it contains the most interesting footnotes of any book published in years. Yet, inevitably, the American reader will be attracted to the lively editorial footnotes which Father Reinhold has added in his process of "Americanizing" Peter Anson's book. In fact, this reader gave in to the temptation to read through all of the footnotes marked "H. A. R." *first* before reading the balance of the text. This process, shameless as it is, does at least have the virtue of proving that Father Reinhold knows well both the goodnesses and the eccentricities of the American scene and that the author selected the best possible editor to present his book to the American public.

As the title declares, the scope of the book is fairly vast: everything from architectural plans, altars, vestments to heating, ventilation, and dust-control is treated. This breadth of material sometimes leads to a shallowness of discussion, but if the general purpose of the book is recalled, this is not disturbing. "This is a practical book," writes the editor. "It will help any man who feels that he agrees with the tenets of the liturgical movement, but cannot find a down-to-earth application of its lofty principles."

The down-to-earth application is in general admirably carried out; once in a while (e. g. the discussion on style and the chapter on organ and choir) the results are of such a minimal and even superficial character that the earthiness may not be of much use. This is not, in any sense, to condemn the book, but merely to suggest that the author might either have limited his ambit somewhat or else treated more adequately some of his subjects. Still, even where Mr. Anson has gone on excursions in shallow waters, he is accurate, interesting, and provocative enough to drive the reader to more complete treatments of the subjects at hand; where Mr. Anson has gone sailing in too deep (or too British) waters, the editor always provides a saving footnote.

The Very Rev. Msgr. Thomas F. Croft-Fraser revised and edited the English edition—the title page tells us that he was chief master of ceremonies of the Vatican Basilica, 1935-40. This fact should reassure any who might wonder about a book of this type being written by a layman. There are ample, not oppressive, references throughout to rubrics and canon law; but, as the American editor remarks, common sense and historical knowledge—instead of mountains of authorities and legal de-

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cisions—are the chief virtues of the work. The double editorship, though maybe somewhat confusing, leads to a better and more readable book.

Mr. Anson's work will be of special value to parish priests concerned with building or revising the small church. It would also be most useful as an introductory work for seminarians and all those desirous of making the house of God a worthy, beautiful, and functional place. The Anson-Croft-Fraser-Reinhold *opus* (and this is saying a great deal for a book of this type) will also make interesting reading for anyone who wants to know something about the proprieties and appropriateness of things pertaining to a church.

Throughout, the book is illustrated by Mr. Anson's own drawings which are competent and only occasionally a bit fussy. In the process of Americanizing the book it is unforunate that a few drawings of American churches could not have been added. ROBERT B. HEYWOOD.

New Compass of the World. A Symposium on Political Geography. Hans W. Weigert, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Richard Edes Harrison, Editors. Macmillan. $5.50.

IN INTRODUCING this symposium as a successor to the war-time *Compass of the World,* the editors observe that ". . . it can be said that victory was won because our side committed fewer geographical blunders than the enemy. We have still to learn the vital lesson that the strategy of the peace must also be based on geography," since the average citizen's concept of geography is unfortunately still stinted by our woefully inadequate instruction in the subject. To most people "geography" still means simple descriptive facts like wheat production in the Argentine—the oft-used photographs of the rice planter in Java—the maps with their pinks, greens and purples. Too few possess the concept of geography as one of the most comprehensive of the sciences—the great bridge between the social and natural sciences. And certainly too few understand the relation of geography and politics—politics being the attempt to organize human beings according to space, which is to say, geography. Political geography is still suffering in the popular mind from having been confused with its nazi offshoot tangent, geopolitics, but it is a sober work like the *New Compass of the World* that will bring us back to the science whose business it is to give us a realistic appraisal of people in their environment, both natural and of their own making.

The pattern of this work is not an attempt to review all situations in the manner of Bowman's herculean *The New World* of the early twenties, but to select the key areas, situations and trends which bear most heavily on the desideration of peace. This approach necessitates omitting much of great interest; for example, it is a pity that the editors have nothing to say about Palestine, certainly an area of first-water geo-political importance (and has been so longer than any area on earth). Thus the first section deals with the north, which in some quarters is so confidently proclaimed as the coming area of conflict. We are provided with some extremely interesting comparisons of the relative development of the North American and Eurasian arctic. The impression that we are doing great things in the north of Canada and Alaska gets quite a jolt in the light of Russian growth and exploitation of their arctic areas.

The second section takes up the internal and peripheral phases of the USSR's organization and policies in the light

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25th Anniversary

In an effort to learn more about its readers, the Commonweal mailed questionnaires in January, as a sampling, to a fifth of its current individual subscribers. Here are a few of our findings: how do your own experiences compare?

For example, the average Commonweal reader last year attended 6.7 professional plays and concerts and 12.6 movies. He read 33.7 books. (One out of every hundred returning the Anniversary ballot frankly stated that he had not read a single book in 1948).

Each present Commonweal subscriber has read the magazine an average of 9.4 years. There are two and a half times more readers living in the city than in the suburbs, and city readers outnumber by six times those in rural areas. Professors and teachers comprise the largest single profession of our subscribers, among whom are also housewives, business executives, attorneys, doctors, secretaries and engineers.

Clergy and religious are an important part of our readership and in the current campaign to save the Commonweal they have been donating Silver Jubilee units in a high proportion. Particularly encouraging for the continuance of our work are the donations thus far of one or more twenty-five dollar Silver Jubilee "shares" from 17 of our American Bishops.

The Commonweal is determined to continue the work it has begun; will you join those readers who have already contributed to this Fund which will enable the magazine to carry on?

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of its geography. Kerner's piece on the Soviet Union as a sea power is an especially good example of politico-geographical writing. Strausz-Hupi sheds light on the history and meaning of boundary changes on the Western frontiers of Russia. The third section concerns itself with Central Europe, highlighted by a study of what could happen if TVA organization were applied to the Danube basin—a situation far more complex than ours since it involves a crossing of several international borders.

The fourth and shortest section evaluates the new meaning of strategic bases and especially the changes in the communication of the British Commonwealth.

The final section discusses extensively the main concern of present-day political geography—population, its growth, its pressures and its confinements. Asia is in the throes of the most acute phases of all these and the *Compass* authors make no bones about the coming crises. These have been discussed in some aspects by several recent authors as Pendell, Osborn, Vogt, and Burch, but here we have it from the comprehensive standpoint of the geographer who by definition must neglect no human, political or natural factor. The book is deceptively dry in its general aspect but there is real excitement and useful learning in its pages. ERNESTINE EVANS.

Passage to Walden. Reginald L. Cook. Houghton. $3.

THIS BRIEF STUDY of Thoreau's relationship to nature is based upon the author's conviction that "the source of his vitality was nature; the ultimate end of this vitality was the cultivation of the human spirit." Professor Cook is a Thoreauvian of long standing, with a deep sympathy for and an obvious intellectual kinship to the "poet naturalist." He has here distilled some of the essence of Thoreau's writing and placed him in relation to the other great literary naturalists.

But this book, which gives the impression of rather woodenly rewritten lecture notes, is not as satisfactory an introduction to Thoreau as Joseph Wood Krutch's recent volume, which is far more penetrating and much more comprehensive in scope. MASON WADE.

CONTRIBUTORS

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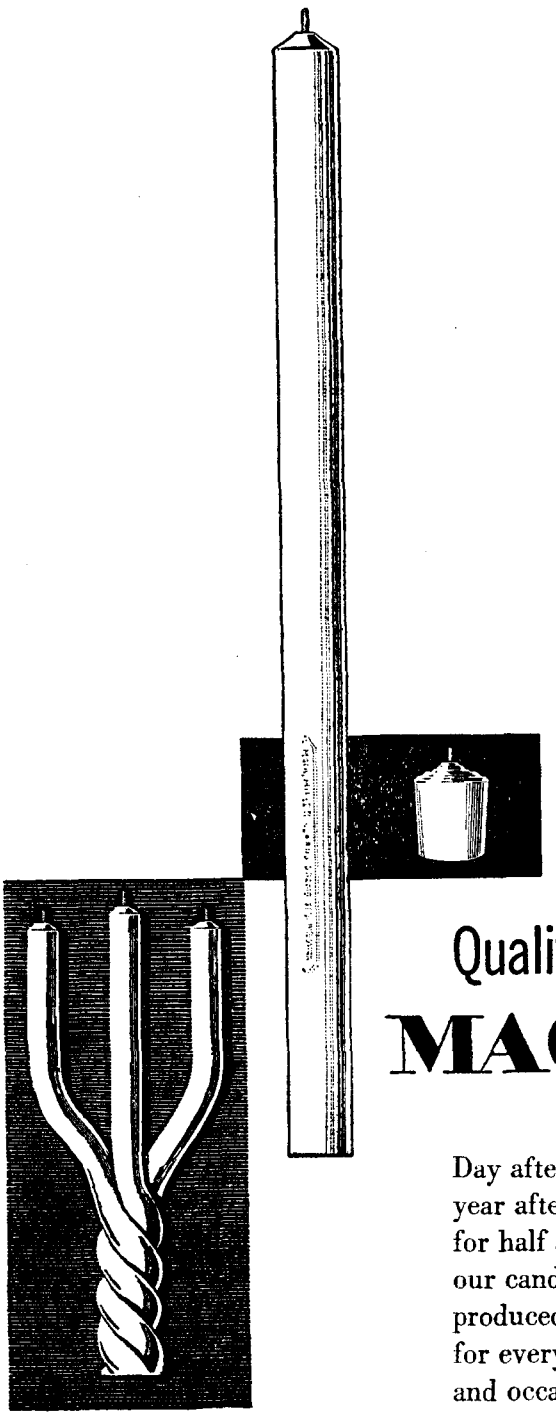

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